

The Importance of Sustainability in the Hotel Industry

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<p>This is a desk research done to see the importance of sustainability from eyes of the potential customer. There are three major hotel chains from different parts of the world chosen for this research to be researched upon. These hotel chains are Radisson Hotel Group, Six Senses chain and Sokos Hotel chain.</p> <p>Sustainability is explained what it is, what it consists of and what kind of repercussions it has if not taken seriously. Responsibilities have been explained of hotels as well and what they do to honour these responsibilities.</p> <p>Research method was qualitative desk research. It was the most suitable method for this research to find out the answers, since the coronavirus outbreak came. Time period of the research was limited since the amount of information would be too massive and too difficult to examine.</p> <p>Various sources are examined to see how sustainability is pointed out in the different hotel chains. The sources used in the desk research were Facebook, Instagram, TripAdvisor and Expedia as well as the hotel chains own web pages. The information was then put on an excel sheet and marked with different colours from bad to outstanding on the visibility of sustainability on their various sources.</p> <p>In the conclusion will be told what was learned in this research and what with the information gathered could be done with. The conclusion also contained a ideal business that would contain all the sustainability traits a company should upkeep.</p>	
Keywords Sustainability, hospitality, hotel	

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1 Introduction

This is a desk research done to see through the eyes of the potential customer how sustainability is portrayed throughout the hotels different communication channels. Sustainability will be expressed how important it is for the hospitality industry and how different parts have impacts on various things.

Tourism industry plays a huge part in some countries revenue, which means they have a lot of energy, produce and water consumption and waste production as well. For this reason, many hotel chains have taken it as responsibility to be sustainable. The tourism industry has grown since the globalization of the world and if not done responsibly it can have negative effects. They could destroy the environment of the location, cause problems to the tourism company, which could lead to firing employees and overusing resources, which can have negative effect for the future generations. If the environment is damaged this could lead to less tourists and causing the businesses to fail in the surrounding area that get their money from tourists. (Ferreira 2019).

1.1 Goal and limitation of the work

The main goal for this thesis is to see how sustainability appears in the eyes of the potential customer, how the customers react to the sustainability's in the different communication channels. With the information provided through this research, it can be used to acknowledge the importance of sustainability influence of the customers decision or does the sustainability have any effect on the customers. It will be pointed out from the research done to show how the potential customers react to the hotel's sustainability.

While showing how important is to be sustainable the thesis would as well point out how the different actions, they take affect other actions for example, creating a more efficient work schedule for the employees and how the sustainability could affect the opinion of the potential customer.

There will be questions throughout this secondary research paper that by answering them helps finding the solutions for this works problem. These questions are about sustainability;

- How sustainability can be seen in the hotels chosen for the research?
- How hotels communication their sustainability actions?
- Is sustainability important in the feedback of the customers

This thesis will be displaying three different hotel chains from two different parts of the world. What kind of sustainable actions they do and how they differ from one and other. Does customer feedback have impact on the company's decisions and does the sustainability actions of these hotels have impact on the decision making on the customers. These hotel chains have been specifically chosen, because these are well known hotels in their own category they operate in and are famous for their actions. They aim to please their clients and local area they operate in, even though they are working not only in different parts of the world, but as well in price and luxury range. They want to create a better tomorrow for the future generation even though they aren't working in the same ballpark.

As the report is more of a research based and it will not have a commissioner. This report will be a Desk research or in other words secondary research. Observation will be used in the qualitative research method to view in May 2020 what hotels communication looks like in the eye of the customer in the social media, their websites and other external sources. The data will be gathered from the spring of 2020.

Limitation of the work is that due to the fact of a global pandemic, which could cause the data to be incorrect in some amounts and the possibility of interviewing any personnel from these hotels would be difficult, since they operate in different parts of the world. The data could be corrupted or insufficient received from them.

1.2 Progress and framework

The theoretical framework of the thesis focuses on the sustainability part on what it really means, what it is for, how it could be utilized and the three pillars of corporate sustainability. How it affects travelling all together.

The three pillars of corporate sustainability will be more thoroughly explained how it could be used to assist in this thesis research. The pillars show the different areas the corporates are operating in and how this effect on what level to what parts of their organization and operating methods. This corporate sustainability's three pillars will be the heart the thesis research on how to improve corporates sustainability actions. First part, which is environmental easily explains that it revolves around reducing carbon emissions for example.

In the first chapter of this secondary research paper, will be introduced what this work is about, what the goals are, are there any limitations to the research, how the process will

be progressed and the framework of it. In the second chapter will be opened up what sustainability means and the infrastructure that this research is based on the three pillars of corporate sustainability. In the subchapter of corporate sustainability, the three pillars will be explained more thoroughly what they mean and what kind of effects they have on different parts of the hotels behaviour and who has influence over them.

Chapter three will be about sustainability in the hotel industry. This chapter will go through how sustainability is important to hotels and why more and more hotels should assimilate new sustainability actions for their companies. What kind of different actions companies should take to improve their sustainability regarding technology and operations.

Chapters 4-5 are about the research itself. What kind of methods are used, where the data is gathered and the research process. In chapter 6 will be the results of the research and will be read through systematically. Last chapter is about the conclusion of this chapter, the summary of the whole work. It will have all the key points of the work, the results and the additional insights for this work.

Research will be done by viewing from information starting from January to May 2020. This research will be started on the first weeks of May 2020 and finished at the of May 2020.

2 Sustainability

In this chapter, we will explain what sustainability is, which is the cornerstone of the thesis topic. It will explain why it is important to be more sustainable, how it affects the future generations, what are the most important parts that people should be concentrating on and why those exact parts are important. Also, it will be expressed the differences of responsibility and sustainability and how these are connected to one and other.

Sustainability means many things and it is not just solely about being more environmentally aware and doing environmentally affecting actions. It means a lot of more things. To define sustainability, it focuses on meeting needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (Grant 2020). In other words, sustainability is the study of how natural systems operate and needs for the ecology to be in balance. Sustainability is to help humans and nature to co-exist in harmony, without people harming the nature. Even though sustainability is to help people live in harmony with the nature around them, the actions that make the sustainability work aren't only regarding fossil fuels and going all electrical with motor vehicles, there are several actions that affect the sustainability. (Mason 2020).

Energy and produce consumption is used in much more bigger quantities in the urban living area than rural area. Therefore, it is fixated more in that living area to create a more sustainable way to operate there. The usage of resources grows every year approximately of 40% from more than the people could replace. Though the urban area is more consuming of the resources the rural area isn't forgotten at all. There are several things the rural living area could help the sustainable cause. (Mason 2020).

As mention before that sustainability is not only solely dedicated to one thing, but also it is to develop more sustainable methods. This is a vast field where things are connected and have big impacts on one and other. They can affect our health, economy, failure in improving their technology through not concentrating in necessary fields and in worse case scenarios even inflation. Focusing on sustainability and development of sustainability helps keeping the nature and humankind live in harmony. It also assists the future generations to live in more liveable planet. These are the reasons why sustainability is important to be acknowledged. (Mason 2020).

One good example of bad sustainability actions are the megacities around the world. They pollute massively their own surroundings and cause illnesses to spread due to incredibly horrendous air pollution. People wear masks not only to be safe from illnesses, but as well

from the air, because it is not safe to breath air. These cities, which are highly polluted are located in China, Vietnam, Japan, India. One of the big issues in these countries and their cities is that they consist of overpopulating their cities and huge amount of these people own a motor vehicle of some sorts, it could be car or motorbike and all of them ride them at the same time. (Hirji 2009).

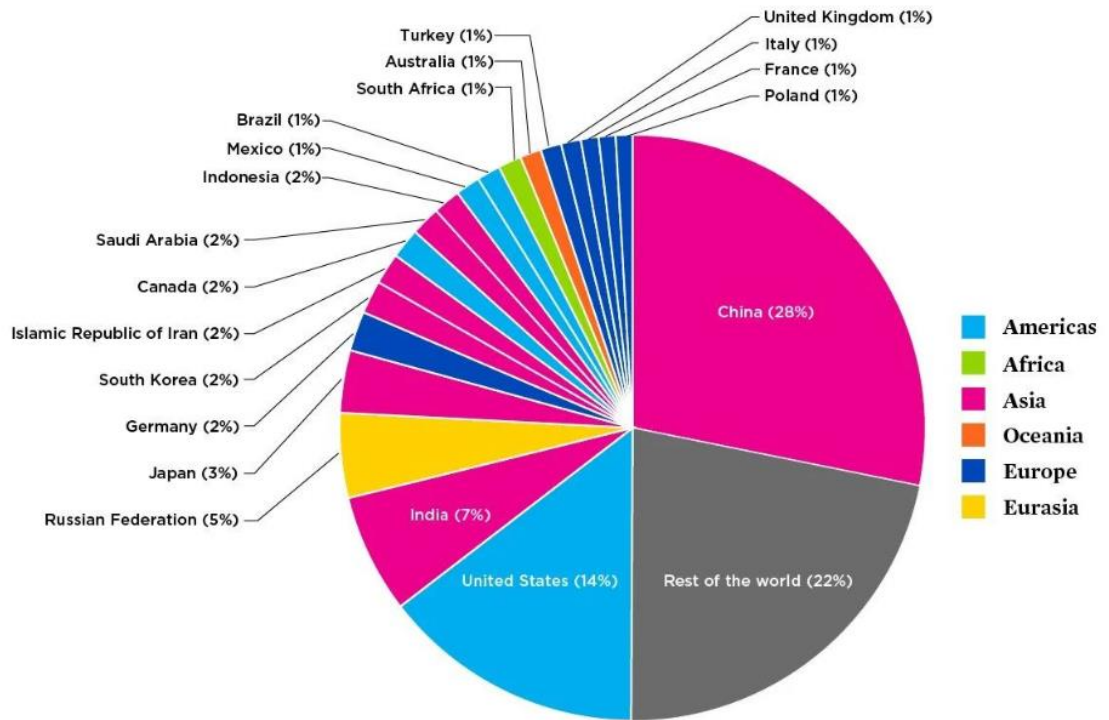


Figure 1. CO2 Emission chart. (Uscsusa.org 2019).

The eastern part of the world (China and India etc.) and the western part of the world (United States) are the biggest polluting characters on this planet as seen in Figure 1. The reason why China is a big player in the CO2 emission is, because they rely on Coal for energy. Though the use of Coal has decreased by about 15 % since 2014, but it is still heavily used, and it is one of the dirtiest ways to gain energy from. Another major factor in China's huge CO2 emission is that there are a lot of people there who require energy and just by trying to produce energy for so many people that creates a big boost in carbon emission. Also, several of these millions of peoples own a motor vehicle ranging from motorbike, car to semi-trucks. This also has a big part in the CO2 emission numbers. (Willow 2019).

2.1 Three pillars of Corporate Sustainability

The Corporate sustainability's three pillars are through what this thesis research is trying to improve the corporates sustainability, better their work effort and workflow and increase their monetary value.

They are divided into The Environmental Pillar, The Economic Pillar and The Social Pillar. They are divided to compartmentalize their sustainable actions. These three pillars help them tackle the issues regarding planet, people and money. The pillars can reflect a lot on the choices of the customer. (Beattie 2019). Even though these pillars are separated and compartmentalized they still are connected holistically to one and other by some mean. These pillars are found in certification schemes and national standards, which create the standard of engage main areas that this planet is facing at this very moment (Mason 2020).

Big companies have started concentrating on these three pillars and with this other companies have begun to feel pressured to start as well otherwise; they might seem to the public as irresponsible and against nature and people. (Beattie 2019). These issues then again can connect to bad brand image and loss of income. Starting to rise from that kind of situation could be very difficult and cost a lot of money for the company.

2.1.1 The Environmental Pillar

This subchapter will explain more thoroughly what the Environmental part of the Corporate Sustainability Pillars mean. It will describe what others are doing in the environmental part of the corporate sustainable pillars.

The environmental pillar in other words means the planet. This all about ecological actions regarding the planet Earth. The actions can differentiate from using more sustainable fuels, reducing the water consumption in different areas to using locally farmed goods like tomatoes and livestock. This pillar where everyone is concentrating on and being very public about it. (Beattie 2019).

Different industries have a different way of tackling the environmental part of the three pillars. Hotels on the other hand have several actions that concern the planet. These actions also are connected to the other pillars the economical (money) pillar and social (people) pillar. Several hotels these days are using water consumption reducing devices on show-

ers and taps, giving advice to the customers to have a choice to reduce water consumption by towel usage with different pamphlets and through their online sites, buying food from local merchants and farmers. When buying from local merchants and farmers, this helps the economy of the government, local area and improving the businesses in the local area also this helps reduce the carbon emission from deliveries, since the goods are coming from nearby areas. (Beattie 2019).

2.1.2 The Economic Pillar

This subchapter will explain more extensively what the Economical part of the Corporate Sustainability Pillars mean. How it could be used and how it is used at the moment by different corporates around the globe.

Economical pillar aka profit/money pillar is about helping the companies organize their money spending by reducing their costs and improving their income, basically governance over monetary income and outcome. This pillar must coincide with the other pillars and especially it cannot trump the others at any cost. The actions regarding governance might not always directly involve money even though it is referred as the profit pillar, but the actions can involve money in a good way or a bad way. Bad way can decrease their income and cause stakeholders to leave. Good way that it could involve is that it keeps the customers, stakeholders, community happy and through that their income could increase. (Beattie 2019).

The economic pillar could be the most challenging pillar of all these three. The reason why it is challenging is, because people tend to disagree with decision-making, people have different kind of views on various topics, which make the business more economically sustainable. (Mason 2020).

It is also about keeping the stakeholders happy by board members and directors, which is a hard job. This might mean to change parts of their business for the benefit of keeping the stakeholders happy. Also following the customers and the company community to know their interests and not differentiate from them. (Beattie 2019).

With this pillar gives the possibility to take sustainable actions in the environmental pillar. As mentioned before the pillars are connected in different ways. For example, if stakeholders want the company to go with biofuel etc. the board members and directors would gather to discuss what kind of choices there are, and which are the cheapest to satisfy the people. (Beattie 2019)

An example for the economical pillar is Six Senses a hotel chain that farms its own vegetables to extent that they are self-sustainable, and they purify their own water and recycle the glass bottles at their hotel resorts. (SixSenses.com 2020).

2.1.3 The Social Pillar

This subchapter will explain in-depth what the Social part of the Corporate Sustainability Pillars mean. Furthermore, how it could be used, how it is used at the moment by different corporates around the globe and how its actions affect the organization and its actions.

By social pillar is meant the people, the customers that use the products of the companies. Companies are also concentrating on creating a good image for themselves and improving their brand for their customers and stakeholders. They are building trust of the people and stakeholders to gain their approval. This trust can be obtained through various ways for instance being active in the community, being neighbourly locally and globally and treating employees fairly. As mentioned in the previous subchapters the activity in the local area creates trust and appreciation from the locals, by buying food from the local merchants and farmers and joining in on events by charity or creating fundraising events or other ways like receive visitors from local fairs etc. Other community activities they might have is sponsorships or even scholarships to different schools. (Beattie 2019).

Employees treatment also influences other parts of the company as well. The fair treatment for the employees alters from creating more flexible work schedule, better benefits, improved maternity and paternity leaves to giving them possibilities to develop themselves while working there. (Beattie 2019).

Another important part of social pillar is the awareness of their supply chain. How they are delivered, who builds them; is there child labour for instance, what kind of conditions are the employees working in and do they have sufficient salary. These factors need to be addressed and the directors, stakeholders, board members need to know so problems could be minimized and created a more sustainable and ethical way to do the operations. These if not controlled properly could cause the companies massive monetary loss and cause media outrage and create a bad image for the brand. Having the media working against a company could be an annoyance and depending on company's size and wealth a steppingstone towards bankruptcy and lawsuits. (Beattie 2019).

Great example of a company's tackling the social pillar of the corporate sustainability is that due to this coronavirus outbreak around the world have declared that people can

work indefinitely from home and have no need to return back to the office when things go back to normal. One of the companies that have done this is social media channel from the United States of America, Twitter. This does make people way more productive and happier and less stressful. It does vary from people to people though. (BBC.com 2020).

2.2 Sustainability in the Hotel Industry

In this chapter, we will explain what hotel industry all is about, what it consists of. It will furthermore tell what other parts of the similar industries are connected to it and how much it uses different resources. What kind of resources are used and where they are used the most. This chapter will also tell how big part of the hospitality industry's the hotel industry is in an example like how much resources are used where and what resources are used the most.

Hotel Industry is a major source of income for some countries and due to the fact that globalization has given the people the ability to travel from thousands of different locations to other locations around the world, this has led to increase of tourist overflow in several locations. For instance, in different industries like hotel industry sustainability can be seen in various ways, which people might not understand why it is sustainable, they might not even mention it publicly that they are doing any sustainable actions in the specific field. Sustainable actions as mention earlier can vary in various ways and have holistic effects on other actions they take and can have good impact or bad repercussions in future for them or the future generations. The sustainable actions for instance hotels take can vary from creating a more efficient work schedule for the employees, buying ingredients for food and cleaning supplies from better providers or even building their buildings with better quality ingredients and with more knowledge on how to create more sustainable house/building.

Sustainability can affect the hotels business in at least 6 ways according to previous experiences and trends. The sustainability actions hotels take have an impact on the cost efficiency, improving their brand image, improving the experience of the guests, economic incentives, corporate brand image and lastly the regulatory affairs. Some of these might sound similar, but in fact they aren't. They can be connected to one and other though. (Lawson 2018).

By Cost efficiency is meant it helps the hotel minimize the cost of different resources they are using and through that it will be great investment in the long run. This money can be used for several other actions like promotions or donations. Better guest experience is

one of the important topics next to reducing costs and improving brand image, but with improving the guest experience it enables the chance of the customer to use the services of the hotel again and maybe even recommend it to others, which will increase their revenue and improve their brand image.

Brand image and corporate brand image are two different things even though they might sound the same. Brand image improves the companies' brand to the public, which pulls more clients. Corporate brand image on the other hand improves the brand image in the eyes of the employee, which could improve the well-being and happiness of the employees, which increases the efficiency of the hotel and pulling in more clients and employees. Economic incentive affects the hotels in a sense that they could have tax write-offs and financial grants from different factions like the government. To get these incentives you need to build the buildings more economically and more "green". Sometimes these actions can cost more money, but with financial grants it helps and in the long run creating buildings more efficiently will matter. (Lawson 2018).

Sustainability in Hotel industry can be measured in at least three different ways. Waste production of their guests per night by kg or litres, freshwater consumption by their guests by night and the utilization of energy and electricity of the whole complex they operate. These can be used to compare hotels of how sustainable they are in different areas. (Greentourism.eu 2020).

2.3 The 12 Sustainable Tourism Goals

Tourism is a huge business around the globe these days. The amount of travellers going to various places every day is far different than in past. Thanks to globalisation it has let the world to connect. Though through globalisation has come also some issues that haunt the tourism world. One of the troubling issues in the tourism world is overtourism. It has ruined and ruins the trips for several travellers, decreasing the return customers and giving the place a bad name (Francis 2020). Not only that it causes damage to the environment and to the businesses that enable it. Thus, World Tourism Organization has created 12 goals of sustainable tourism to help the industry to improve their economy, social standing especially with the locals and protect the environment in 2005. (Greentourism.eu 2020).

The 12 goals for sustainable tourism set by World Tourism organisation are the following:

- **Economic Vitality**

- Ensuring the viability and the competitiveness of the tourism destination for the continuation of prosperity and bringing benefits in the long run.
- **Local Prosperity**
 - to amplify to the max the contribution to the local communities.
- **Environmental Purity**
 - to minimize the damage done to the environment in the air, water, and land and to reduce the waste produced by the visitors and the businesses.
- **Efficiency of resources**
 - To reduce the utilization of non-renewable energy sources and that are also quite limited.
- **Biological Diversity**
 - To protect and support the environment and the wildlife especially where the business operates in.
- **Physical incorruptibility**
 - To upkeep and improve the standards of the landscapes in the rural and urban areas and to escape doing physical and/or visual damage to the environment.
- **Richness of Culture**
 - To support and respect the local cultures of the host counties and communities as well as their historical heritage.
- **Wellbeing of the community**
 - To upkeep and improve the quality of life in the local communities, including social structures and locals having access to the resources, amenities and life support systems, avoiding any form of social degradation or exploitation.
- **Local Control**
 - Hotels bringing on board locals to empower the communities and improve the future development of tourism in the area taking in mind of the locals.
- **Visitor Fulfilment**
 - To provide non discriminatory service for everyone who travels to their locations.
- **Social Equity**
 - To seek fair distribution of economy to the recipient community not favouring anyone.
- **Employment Quality**
 - To improve the quality of jobs and the amount of jobs created and supported by the business and their conditions.

(Greentourism.eu 2020).

2.3.1 Environmental responsibility

This subchapter will introduce the environmental responsibilities of the hotels. How they impact the hotel industry.

Through environmental responsibility in hotel industry is meant that they try to preserve the nature, wildlife, reduce waste production, minimize the water consumption and use more sustainable energy sources, these actions also reduce the cost when going forth with sustainability. Some hotels if possible, buy from the local merchants produce to support the local communities. This affects environmental, social and the economical part of these three responsibilities. It reduces carbon emission, because it is not brought from far away, upkeeps the local's businesses and keeps the locals happy. Hotels immerse themselves into the community when they support the locals. (Frangos 2018).

Environmental responsibility has four goals from the 12 Sustainable Tourism Goals.

These are the following:

- **Physical Integrity:** To upkeep and improve the standards of the landscapes in the rural and urban areas and to escape doing physical and/or visual damage to the environment.
 - **Biological Diversity:** To protect and support the environment and the wildlife especially where the business operates in.
 - **Efficiency of Resources:** To reduce the utilization of non-renewable energy sources and that are also quite limited.
 - **Environmental Purity:** To minimize the damage done to the environment in the air, water, and land and to reduce the waste produced by the visitors and the businesses.
- (Greentourism.eu 2020).

2.3.2 Economic Responsibility

Economical responsibility in the hotel industry means the continuity of their future operations and securing the jobs of the employees. For this to happen compromises have to be made to make it possible. There is going to be planning, analyzation of the market and studying to keep the business competitive so the jobs are secure. Skills need to develop constantly to upkeep the competitiveness. (Aspocomp.com 2020).

To keep the business economically responsible decision, have to be socially and environmentally responsible. This can be an expensive thing in the beginning, but in the long run the choice will be forthcoming. Social standing in the economical responsibility appears in the sense that keeping the employees, customers and stakeholders happy is a great investment, which can bring more revenue to the business in the end than just doing one-time runs. (Aspocomp.com 2020).

Economical Responsibility has three goals that fit the description. These goals are:

- **Economic Viability:** Ensuring the viability and the competitiveness of the tourism destination for the continuation of prosperity and bringing benefits in the long run.
- **Local Prosperity:** To amplify to the max the contribution to the local communities.
- **Employment Quality:** To improve the quality of jobs and the amount of jobs created and supported by the business and their conditions.
(Greentourism.eu 2020).

2.3.3 Social responsibility

This subchapter is about social responsibility in the hotel industry. What it is all about exactly and what kind of impacts it has.

Social Responsibility in the hotel industry means to take inconsideration all the factors regarding people. This means employees, guests and local communities. Hotels need to think how their business affects the local communities and tries to do everything for it not to affect negatively on the local area. With guests' hotels are non-discriminating on gender nor on race and culture. They welcome everyone equally. With employees everyone is treated fairly and justly nevertheless race, gender, age or culture. (Aspocomp.com 2020).

There are 5 goals from the 12 Sustainable tourism goals that fit well into the social responsibility of tourism industry. These goals are the following:

- **Social Equity:** To seek fair distribution of economy to the recipient community not favouring anyone.
- **Visitor Fulfillment:** To provide non-discriminatory service for everyone who travels to their locations.
- **Local Control:** Hotels bringing on board locals to empower the communities and improve the future development of tourism in the area taking in mind of the locals.
- **Community Wellbeing:** To upkeep and improve the quality of life in the local communities, including social structures and locals having access to the resources, amenities and life support systems, avoiding any form of social degradation or exploitation.
- **Cultural Richness:** To support and respect the local cultures of the host counties and communities as well as their historical heritage.
(Greentourism.eu 2020).

3 Research methods and the execution of it

This chapter, we will explain what the research topics of this thesis is, the research problem and the methods by which the problem was solved and clarified. The whole research process is explained in stages for example, where we started and how much was done in few months. study how visible are the sustainable actions of the three hotels from the perspective of the potential customers.

3.1 Qualitative research

This chapter of the thesis will explain what qualitative research means more thoroughly and what kind of qualitative method is used for this thesis, also has the data been sufficient enough for the thesis to be used. It will express also why qualitative research style was chosen for this thesis and where the information has been searched and collected from.

Qualitative research is a research method concentrating on data that is non-numerical a research method that is more about the information and not about the quantity of it. Qualitative research can have various methods of gathering information. For one interviewing a person or group of people is a great way to gather data for a qualitative research and another one that is used for this research paper is Observation method, which means information is gathered by observing certain things that are about the research at hand. Also, surveys can be used in a qualitative research, in a sense that the survey is not just yes and no answers, but with open questions. (Crossman 2020).

3.1.1 Observation method

Observation method was chosen and for the method few sources were decided to be used since there is a pandemic outbreak going out there. The information would've been much harder to gain if any other methods were chosen instead. Though gathering information through this method also is little bit harder than if there wasn't a pandemic going on.

Observation method means collecting data through observation and not through interviews or questionnaires. It is classified as a participatory study, which means that the researcher submerses to the same setting of the observant. This method can be structured or unstructured, which means that in structured method there is predetermined objectives

that guide the observation and data gathering and in the unstructured there is not predetermined objective. The research at hand will be structured with the objective to find out is sustainability seen easily by the customer and how does the hotels show it or does it at all show. (Research-methodology.com 2020).

The sources used for the observation method are Tripadvisor, expedia.com, social media sites and hotels own websites. These are suitable for the research questions mentioned in the previous chapters and suitable especially for this research method, because they can be used to study the hotels and the potential customers perspective of the hotels they have used or are going to use. In this observation method will be benchmarking different hotel chains on how their sustainability appears in the eye of a customer. When benchmarking the hotel chains on the social media and OTA Channels random hotels will be chosen to not be favoured by any factor for example rumour or anything.

Benchmarking would be done by grading the hotels results from minimal to excellent with text and code in a chart in the different fields of the research.

3.2 Research process

This part of the thesis will explain what the research process has been and how it ended it to be that exact way thoroughly. It will go through step-by-step how the findings have been found and which sources contained more information and which methods found least amount of data for the thesis, thus creating a more extensive view of the process.

Observation method was chosen to the pandemic outbreak in the world and that causing social distancing by everyone. That made the research harder to do it the traditional way observation method was chosen instead. Through the observation method different sources, which are; social media channels of the hotels, their websites, and additional information from customers that have left feedback on sites for example Tripadvisor and expedia.com. were viewed by the author to see from the eyes of the potential customer, because they can give great hints does hotels sustainability show itself, how the customers react to them and does sustainability come out from the customers feedbacks and

This whole process will be done in May 2020 week 2 and the data gathered from the various sources will be from the spring of 2020. Observation table will be created in the end that will show what has been studied, what has been found, where it was found and from pillars do the findings fit in.

The benchmarking will be done by viewing the hotels various communication channels on how they communicate to the outside world about their sustainability, who does it more obviously, how much does sustainability affect their operations. The customers view will be also examined by going through comments and reactions on social media channels if sustainability is perceived by the customer as an important factor. In the comments and reactions on the social media channels words referring to sustainability, nature, environment and socially responsible. To simplify the topics what are researched in this desk research are the **social media visibility about sustainability, social media sustainability referencing amount, web page information visibility about sustainability, online travel agencies and customer feedback amounts and referencing sustainability in the online travel agency channels.**

A chart will be made in the end to show the results of the research. The chart will be consisting of six research topics of the three hotel chains. The results will be marked in text and with colour codes; red = bad, yellow = minimal, orange = mediocre and green = excellent.

4 Research results

This chapter will be about the research results gathered from qualitative method. The results will be laid out on a table as seen on figure 1 and they will be compared to one and other to see what kind of differences there are. With these results it can be seen what the most concentrated topics are the industry is focusing on and see what other topics should be improved. Observation table

The hotel chains that were chosen for the desk research comparison are Six Senses, Sokos Hotels and Radisson Hotel Group. These hotel chains are located all around the world. These hotel chains are in two different categories, because one is for families and for adults and relatively low-cost Radisson and Sokos Hotel compared to the other choice and the other one is high-end couples retreat usually for more wealthy people Six Senses. Why it is for rich people, it is because the cost for one night goes for minimum of 500 € per night and the most expensive is ----€ a night, it differs from the rooms/houses size and accommodation's in them and as well as the season of travelling.

4.1 Six Senses

One of the hotel groups that were chosen was Six Senses, a franchise that has hotels located around the world from middle east to Asia. Six Senses operating style is to rejuvenate your senses in their resorts. The resorts are located and created to resemble the local culture and in their natural beauty. They provide worthwhile experiences in their hotels; their hospitality is through empathic ways.

Different hotels from the franchise provide different kind of sustainable choices, which can attract the customers to come their hotels. The sustainable attractions vary from gathering own herbs, which are in the resorts area or even gather eggs from their chicken coup for your own breakfast if you feel like it or feeding the animals in their resort area. These operations are a great attraction for customers, but are quite high maintenance, due to the fact that the produce has to be always 100% fresh and clean for the clients and there cannot be any sick animals, damaged herbs or overcrowding of animals neither any other kind of mistreatment of the animals.

Six Senses in Con Dao, Vietnam as see in the image below is located on nice cove with golden sand beach, which is one of their high-class resorts. Some of the hotel rooms/apartments are located right on the beach and others with higher view of the sea.

Because some of the rooms are quite far away from the hotel's restaurant and main beach bar you can order for free a cart that takes you to your desired location in the hotel. You also have a concierge that you could call if there is anything you require. The carts that are used in the resort are electrical, there is also on every villa 2 bicycles for the inhabitants that you could use to cycle to the restaurant and back.



Image 1. Six Senses, Con Dao, Vietnam. (Sixsenses.comB 2020).

Even though the resort is big and has people moving around, they still manage to safely create a safe zone for the turtles that hatch on their beach from time to time. When they hatch it is a spectacular occasion to witness. These are one of the sustainable actions they do in their resort that affects the nature in a good way. Six Senses Con Dao grow some of their own vegetables as well in their own garden located within the resort. This helps minimizing the cost of deliveries and burning of fuel. Due to the fact that resources they need are delivered by air or by sea.

4.1.1 Social Media Channels

Sustainability has been followed from the months January to May 2020 any sustainability related postings. They can vary from social, economic to environmental related sustainability postings. The point of view from the customer will be explained here.

Customers of Six Senses hotel chain or potential customers do not all seem to be posting that much regarding sustainability in any sense. As Six Senses is a quite big hotel chain it

has several hashtags for their hotels, so the easiest way to find out about all of them is to go with the #Sixsenses. There are few posts about sustainability but compared to the amount of the other posts with the same hashtag #Sixsenses the number of posts that contain sustainability in anyway are minimal. As seen from these two images below how the customers have posted about their trip or about the hotel.



Image 2. Screenshot of Instagram Six Senses Yao Noi (Phuket). (Maya_gypsy 2020).



Image 3. Screenshot of Instagram. Aqua, your guardian at @sixsensesdourovalley 🌿 A refined 19th century manor in (Thesustainabletraveller 2020).

Six Senses the hotels themselves do post more sustainable related posts for example this image below, which is an image taken from the post of the video. Through viewing several hundred of posts from Six Senses own Instagram accounts, they tend to refer more often to sustainability. They have different kind of hashtags in their posts and descriptions referring something about themselves for example, #SustainableLiving, #TurtleHatchling and #Sustainability. In these posts the people, who follow them or who follow the hashtags post comments that are positive and some even want to visit the location when seeing these videos and/or images. (sixsensescondao 2020).

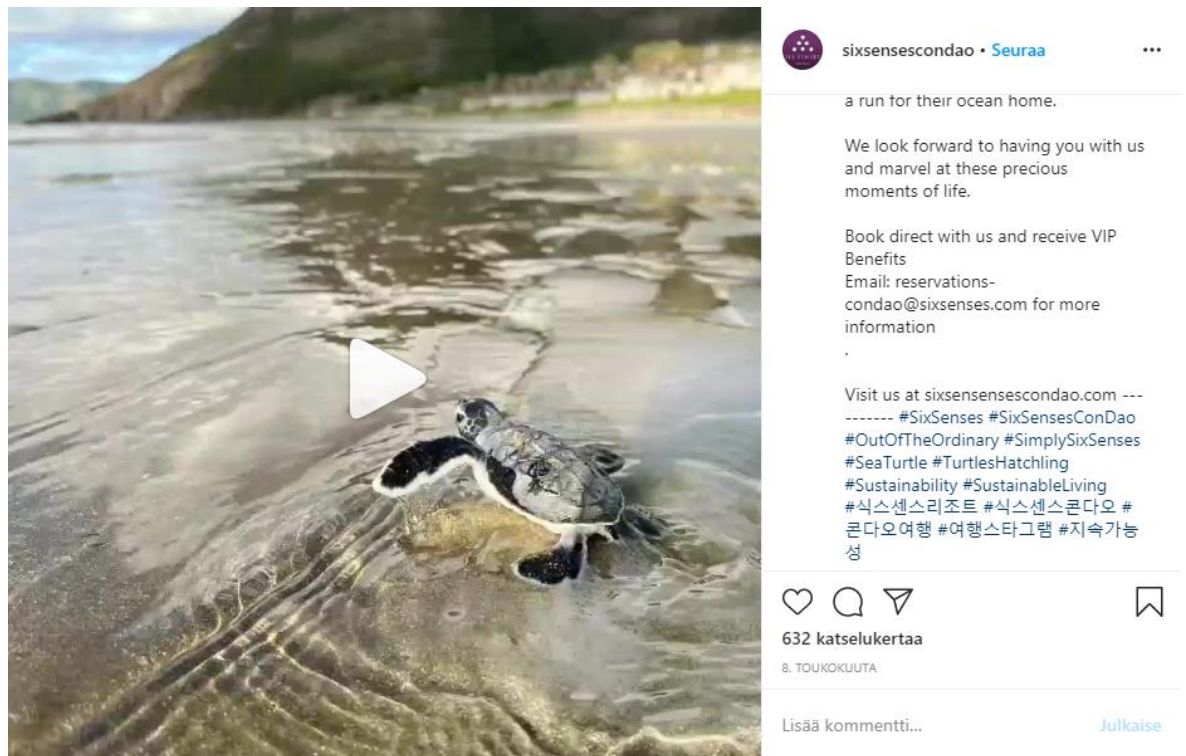


Image 4. Screenshot of sixsensescondao account on instagram. At sunrise today, we were fortunate to witness 65 newly hatched turtles make a run for their ocean home. (sixsensescondao 2020).



Image 5. Screenshot of SixSensesYaoNoi on Facebook. In nature, you leave yourself behind. (SixSensesYaoNoi 2020).

The sustainability reference is not just a one-time occurrence or short term as seen from image 1 through image 5. It is their way of life in Six Senses. The sustainability is part of their business model and how they draw in their customers and it can be seen throughout

almost all of their posts on Instagram and Facebook. It does not matter whether is it Facebook or Instagram they are consistent with their business model and what they want to show their clients.

4.1.2 Web Page



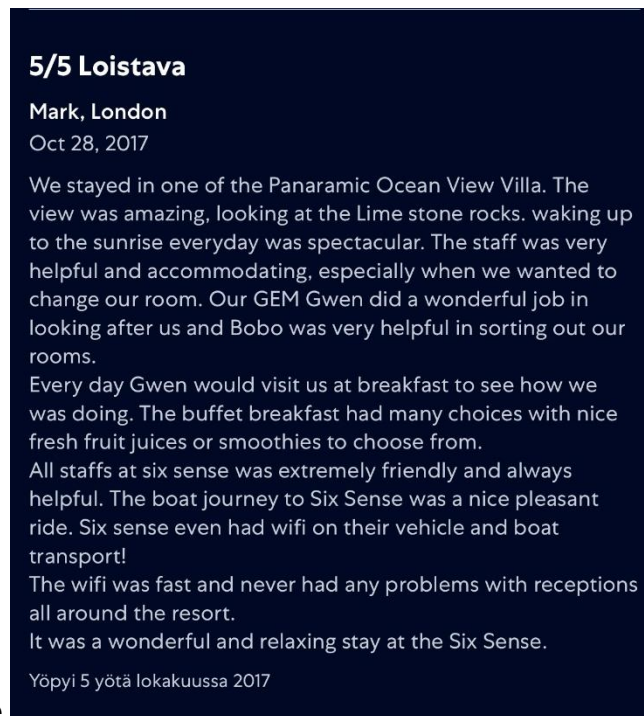
Image 6. Picture of Six Senses Main Webpage Menu setting. (SixSenses.com 2020).

On Six Senses Hotel chain main webpage can easily be seen about how open they are about sustainability and how they feel about it. It even overwhelms with sustainability related information. This information is easily found and about all their hotels in the chain as well. All their hotels provide different sustainability actions ranging from food to recycling and social related actions. "Sustainability is not something that we do; it is who we are" (SixSenses.com 2020) a straight quote from their website.

4.1.3 Online Travel Agencies Channels

In the Online Travel Agencies channels Expedia and TripAdvisor were chosen to be viewed through 2 different hotels from the three hotel chains chosen. The hotels from Six Sense hotel chain were Con Dao, Vietnam and Ko Yao Thailand. These were chosen to

see if the consistency of the hotel's reaction from the social media channels were different



than in here.

Image 7. Screenshot from Expedia application on iPhone. (Stefan's iPhone 2020).

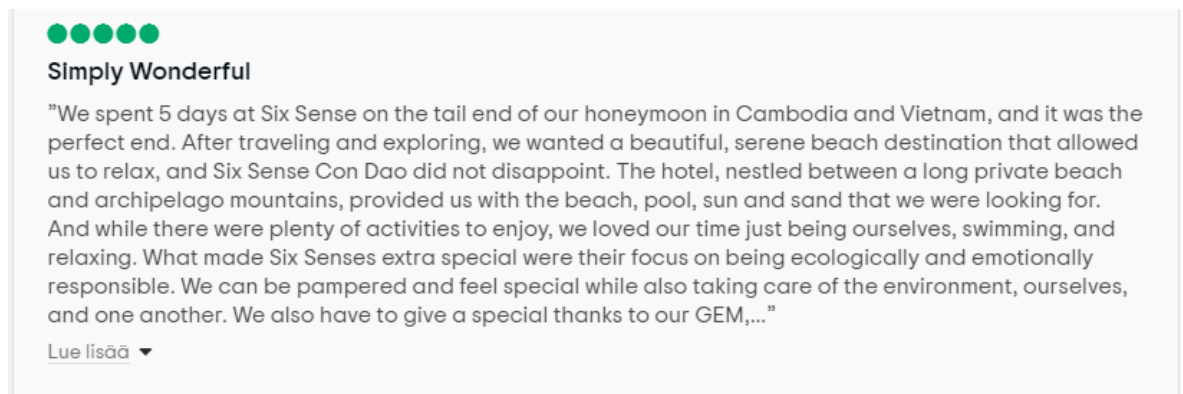


Image 8. Screenshot of comment from TripAdvisor webpage of Six Senses Con Dao hotel. (TripAdvisor 2020).

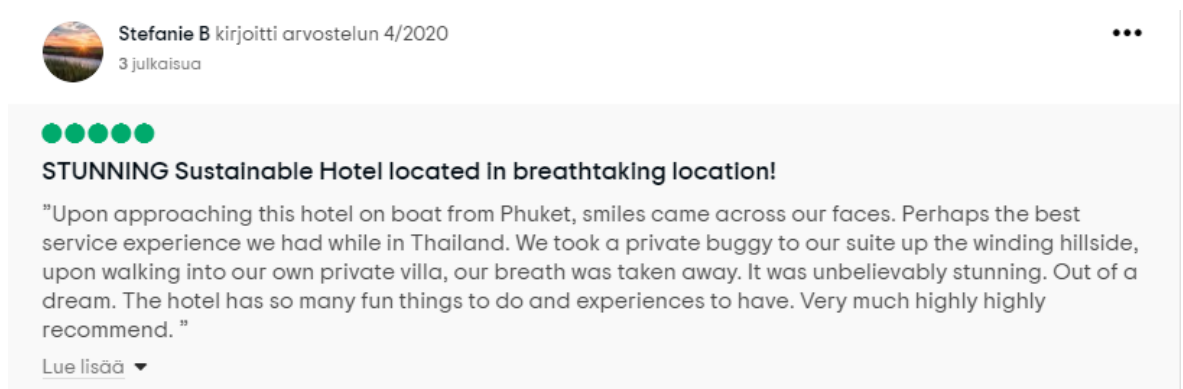


Image 9. Screenshot of comment from TripAdvisor webpage of Six Senses Yao Noi hotel. (TripAdvisor 2020).

In the TripAdvisor webpage there aren't many customer feedbacks from January to May 2020 due to the coronavirus, but the ones that were there mostly consisted on praising the hotel and their staff, how professional and personally welcoming they were. The sustainability was hard to find and not so many people were concentrating on the sustainability in anyway. The sustainability to be found from the comments people need to understand what sustainability is to see what they are saying. There was some post clearly about environmental sustainability, but nothing else as seen in Image 9. In Image 8 and 7 People concentrate on the social responsibilities of the hotel's sustainability, but it is not obvious, and they do not state it. These kinds of comments were more often found than environmentally sustainable ones. Economical sustainable comments were nowhere to be found. It seems that it is not important part of the experience for them through this feedbacks found from January to May 2020.

4.2 Sokos Hotels

Sokos Hotels is the biggest Finnish hotel chains and it has all over Finland altogether 50 hotels. Sokos Hotels also has few hotels in Estonia and Russia. The hotel chain is part of the S-Group, which is a company that has its hands in major services, like shops and gas stations. It is owned by their clients who have their club cards. If you are a client in the S-group club, you can get bonus points from staying at Sokos Hotels and their shops like Prisma and Abc gas stations. (Sokoshotels.fi 2020).

Sokos Hotels have three different kinds of hotel types around Finland, Estonia and Russia. These three hotel types are called:

- Original – Hotel
 - This hotel type is the basic hotel type of Sokos Hotel chain where the atmosphere is based on the Finnish culture, no hassle even if you are a walk-in client. Easy to assimilate.
- Break – Hotel
 - Break hotel type differs from the others that it is more than just a hotel, it is a place to relax or to have fun or even do work. It is a place where you can let yourself loosen up and get out of your normal life with different activities.
- Solo – Hotel
 - Solo hotel type is filled with the local culture, with a warm welcoming feeling and a personal touch to it. (Sokoshotels.fi 2020).

4.2.1 Social Media Channels

Sustainability has been followed from the months January to May 2020 any sustainability related postings. They can vary from social, economic to environmental related sustainability postings. The point of view from the customer will be explained here.



Image 10. Screenshot of sokoshotels account on Instagram. (sokoshotels 2020).



Image 11. Screenshot of Instagram of sokoshotels account. (sokoshotels 2020).

The sustainability seen in Instagram are very minimal and the reactions from the customers is non-existent on the social media channels from January to May 2020, this can be seen from image 10 to 11. On Facebook even though Instagram is owned by Facebook, the sustainability related topics are more visible to the customer, but the reactions by customers are extremely minimal in the months January to May 2020 as seen in image 12 from screenshot of Facebook posting from their Sokos Hotels account.

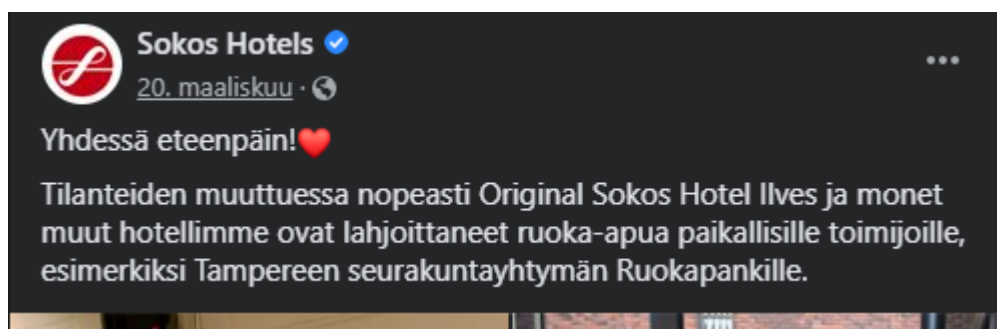


Image 12. Screenshot of Facebook Sokos Hotels posting (Sokos Hotels 2020).

4.2.2 Web Page

Sokos Hotel main web page does not signal immediately anything regarding sustainability, but when you scroll down to the bottom you can see a link regarding sustainability in their

hotel chain. When you click the link, it sends you to a place where they tell everything from their locations, food, people and environment. Before you click the link, you can see certificates owned by the Sokos Hotel Chain under the link as seen in image 13. Sokos Hotels Chain was chosen to be most sustainable, reliable and prestigious of all of the hotels in Finland in 2019. The information regarding sustainability in different topics are in abundance. (Sokoshotel.fi 2020).



Image 13. Screenshot of Sokos Hotel Certificates (Sokoshotel.fi 2020).

4.2.3 Online Travel Agencies Channels

In the Online Travel Agencies channels Expedia and TripAdvisor were chosen to be viewed through 2 different hotels from the three hotel chains chosen. The hotels from the Sokos Hotel chain Flamingo Finland and Sokos Hotel Viru Estonia. These were chosen to see if the consistency of the hotels reaction from the social media channels were different than in here.

Sokos Hotel Viru in Estonia had no feedbacks regarding sustainability in any sense from January to May 2020. Through the customer feedback channel TripAdvisor the customers, who visited the sites did not refer to the sustainability once. On TripAdvisor Sokos Hotel Flamingo, Finland had also non-existent feedbacks regarding sustainability, it didn't point out at any point from the months January to May 2020. Customers did not pay attention on sustainability.

4.3 Radisson Hotel Group

Radisson Hotel Group was founded back in the year 1960. It was when Arne Jacobsen combined the Radisson hotel with Carlson. They have over 75 years of experience in the hospitality industry and with it the Radisson Hotel Group has made itself to become one of the biggest players in the industry. Radisson Hotel Group has powerful brands that bring exceptional service and world class hospitality. (Radissonhotelgroup.com 2020).

Radisson Hotel Group consists of several brands that have merged along several decades. The brands are the following;

- Radisson
- Radisson Blu
- Radisson Red
- Park Inn By Radisson
- Country Inn & Suites
- Park Plaza
- Radisson Collection
- Radisson Meetings

The group has also loyalty program called Radisson Rewards, with what you could get nights for free if you have enough points for various hotels. There are also restaurants by the Radisson Hotel Group that have various themes ranging from high class to culture based. The restaurants are located all around the world. They take in mind everything in the restaurants, the smell, the music and the design. (Radissonhotelgroup.com 2020).

4.3.1 Social Media Channels

Sustainability has been followed from the months January to May 2020 any sustainability related postings. They can vary from social, economic to environmental related sustainability postings. The point of view from the customer will be explained here.

Radisson Blu Plaza Helsinki and Park Inn By Radisson Central Tallinn were chosen for the examples to search through their Facebook accounts about sustainability. These hotels were chosen in random for fairness. They have both different “brands” even though they are under the same main brand Radisson Hotel Group. Also, from one of their account that connects all their hotels around the world was browsed to see if there was any relations of sustainability in any way. A picture from their main Facebook account that

connects all of their hotels together was taken as well to show an example of their sustainability.



Image 14. Plan a meeting. (ParkInnbyRadissonCentralTallinn 2020).



Image 15. Tee ekoteko. (RadissonBluPlazaHotelHelsinki 2020).

As seen image 15 they do talk about environmental friendliness through food, but they do not elaborate anything about it. How it is ecological and how it affects the nature. Throughout January to May there is very limited amount of any sustainability related topics or anything obvious to the customers view.



Image 16. Journey. (Radisson 2020).

In image 16 can be seen a great example of how Radisson cares about the culture of the host country where their hotel is located at. They respect it by creating it to fit into the scenery without harming the view at all and not making it stick out like a sore thumb. This is a good way of being sustainable as well. Easily seen information, but minimal reactions from people and not sure are they from customers. Information about sustainability is not so see-through like other hotel chains, but there is still references to sustainability in some way. Minimal reactions from people.

4.3.2 Web Page

Radisson Hotel group has immediately visible information about their sustainability and responsibilities as seen in image 17. They have vast information on all sectors social, economy and environmental. Radisson shows what kind of actions they are taking, working on different charities and how different hotels operate their sustainability actions. Information is easily found and can be understood as well. Through the eyes of a customer it can be seen as a great employer, great accommodator and great sustainably influencing player.

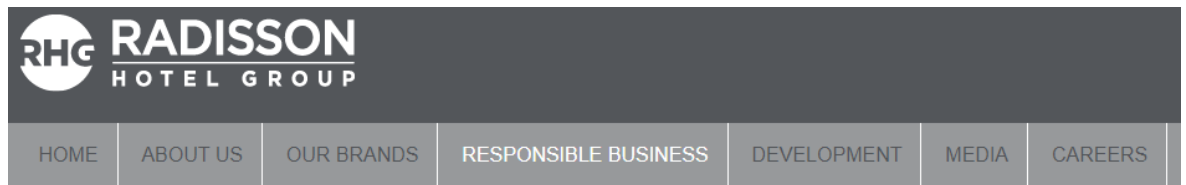


Image 17. Screenshot of Radisson Hotel group main page (Radissonhotelgroup.com 2020).

4.3.3 Online Travel Agencies Channels

In the Online Travel Agencies channels Expedia and TripAdvisor were chosen to be viewed through 2 different hotels from the hotel chains chosen. The hotels from Radisson Hotel Chain Park Inn By Radisson Estonia and Radisson Blu Plaza. These were chosen to see if the consistency of the hotel's reaction from the social media channels were different than in here.

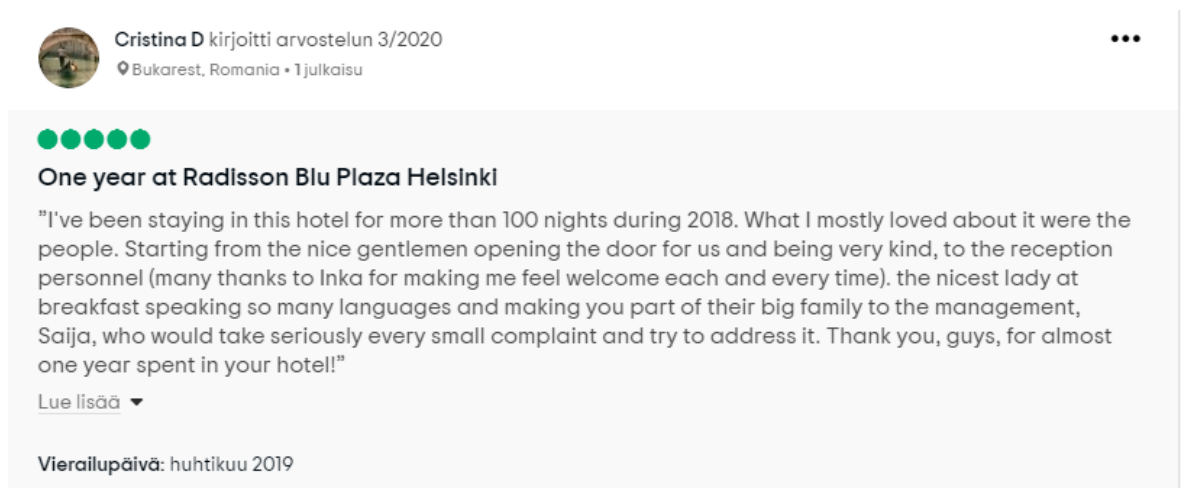


Image 17. Screenshot from TripAdvisor customer feedback section. (Radisson Blu Plaza 2020).

4.4 Result Comparison

Six Senses Hotel chain is high-class as mentioned previously. Their business revolves around sustainability and especially environmentally related sustainability, but as well with social and economic responsibilities included. Online Travel Agencies (OTA) Channels customer feedbacks concentrate mostly on the social side of the sustainability and on the environmental side. There aren't a lot of feedbacks for these hotels and not all of them are about their sustainability, nor is it on the other feedbacks very see-through. Some do say

it, but if you understand sustainability then you would see the connections. Their social media postings also revolve around their sustainability and the environmental part of the sustainability appears more often. Customers tend to react to the sustainable part by liking them, but not commenting on them or anything and if commented it might be on few posts from hundreds posted.

Out of all these three chosen hotel chains Sokos Hotel is the one that has less pressure on sustainability visually. Through the potential customers eyes Sokos hotel does not seem to concentrate on sustainability, unless you dig deeper. They have abundance of information regarding sustainability, but it is not highlighted as the other two hotel chains.

As seen throughout the research that all these companies have actions towards sustainability in social, environmental and economic point of view, but not all of them advertise as much. Some have it as an attraction and a way of life for their business. Their business revolves around sustainability in all senses and others have it as well as part of their business. It is important for them Sokos and Radisson, but it does not show as much as Six Senses. They are proudly advertising their sustainability actions. This can be easily seen throughout their websites, social media and OTA channel feedbacks from customers. People have noticed it as well and some have gone there or revisited the location due to the sustainability they have and provide. Six Senses goes above and beyond to be sustainable this can be seen in their recycling actions and trying to fit in the scenery on the location where their hotel is, so it does not harm the view or nature, Radisson also does the same in fitting into the culture of the host country.

Figure 1. Comparison chart.

Hotel Chain Name	Social Media/Visibility of Sustainability
Six Senses	Excellent
Radisson Hotel Group	Good
Sokos Hotel	Minimal
	Social Media/Sustainability referencing amount
Six Senses	Excellent
Radisson Hotel Group	Good
Sokos Hotel	Good
	Web Page/Information visibility
Six Senses	Excellent
Radisson Hotel Group	Excellent
Sokos Hotel	Good
	Web Page/Information Amount
Six Senses	Excellent
Radisson Hotel Group	Excellent
Sokos Hotel	Excellent
	OTA Channels/Customer feedback amount
Six Senses	Good
Radisson Hotel Group	Good
Sokos Hotel	Good
	OTA Channels/Customer feedback referencing sustainability
Six Senses	Minimal
Radisson Hotel Group	Good
Sokos Hotel	Good

Excel sheet is done by going through January to May 2020 of comments, postings and feedbacks from multiple sources. All of the feedbacks on the Online travel agencies have been viewed from the chosen hotels to add more consistency to this table. Several dozens of postings from the two social media channels were viewed. Some hotel chains like Sokos Hotel and Radisson postings on Facebook all were viewed due to the minimal amount of them and some like Six Senses where approximately hundred viewed on Instagram due to the large amount of postings. Six Senses posting all were chosen by random throughout January to May 2020 timeline.

Grading for this chart is text and colour based, because the amount of information will vary by hotel chains, especially on the social media channels and OTA channels. It fits also more logically to give out text and colour-based grades to the web page topics.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion to this desk research, sustainability plays a huge part in the tourism world, in every. It is not that simple as well. There are people who do not understand what sustainability really is and how the companies are acting on it. Many companies in the tourism world have great influences in sustainability and some may have it as way of life even.

Information regarding and about sustainability can be found on the websites of the hotels and what they are doing to be sustainable, but the it does not reflect that much on through the customers in feedbacks or comments, even though the hotel chains have won sustainability related medals/certificates that prove their allegiance to the sustainable cause. Customers tend not to acknowledge the sustainability so publicly, when going through comments and feedbacks and when reacting to them it is not a major factor to customers.

What I'd change in this is to show the potential customers when they use the services of the hotel how they contribute to the sustainability actions of the hotel and through that encourage them. Like Sokos Hotel and Radisson Hotel chain need to be bolder to talk about the sustainability on their websites of their other brands as well since they have a lot of sustainability related actions.

The ideal business is to be self-sustainable in every possible way, trying to be reasonably priced so the sustainability is worth it and at the same time encouraging people to be sustainable. Having high-class and middle-class options for people to be able to enjoy the feeling of doing sustainable travelling. Almost ideal business is Six Senses, since they have own gardens for vegetable, some even own livestock, water bottle recycling and waste recycling as well. A perfect business is to be socially, environmentally and economically sustainable and responsible and all of these need to in balance with each other not overruling one and other. This can be an expensive at this moment, but when more and more business does this kind of things the prices will lower due to the technology development in the area.

5.1 Learnings

What I learned in this desk research is that sustainability has huge impact on a lot of parts of our lives and especially of our future lives and generations. Sustainability actions are taken by major hotel chains, which is a great news, but people tend not to view this publicly as an important fact when viewing comments and feedbacks from various sources. It

does not point out at all that sustainability is an important factor when choosing hotels. Some take it, but not obviously.

Also, what I learned is what sustainability really is means and what it consists of. Not just environmental things, like what the media tells people, but social and economic related things as well. Information is out there, but it is not pressured on people even though it should, because globalization has allowed more and more travellers to visit more locations.

Many hotels have similar sustainable actions, which is a great news that they follow a standard and some even are going above and beyond on sustainability. Creating leading models in sustainability to other companies to be encouraged.

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